548 582 882 The name ɛfɔ́tswấɛla does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the ɛfɔ́tswấɛla conducts herself like any Nkundɔ́ girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586x It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [178] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548 369 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

369 548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by [586] many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. In [114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.- Analyst]

The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Beloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.